

Spying system of the state in the light of Seerah of Holy Prophet (PBUH)

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Abstract

This abstract explores the concept of a spying system in the context of the state, drawing insights from the Seerah (PBUH). It delves into the principles of justice, governance, and the role of intelligence gathering, as exemplified by the Prophet (PBUH) during his time. The Seerah (PBUH) is a significant historical source that provides valuable insights into various aspects of governance and the administration of justice. One such aspect is the use of intelligence gathering and espionage in the interest of the state and its people. The paper examines the ethical considerations and limitations surrounding the practice of spying in the context of Islamic principles and the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings. It highlights the importance of upholding justice, fairness, and respect for privacy, even when it comes to intelligence gathering. Drawing from the Seerah, the abstract analyzes several instances where He (PBUH) employed intelligence gathering practices to ensure the safety and well-being of his community. These instances shed light on the need for a balanced system of surveillance that respects individual rights while safeguarding the interests of society. Furthermore, the abstract explores instances from the Seerah where Holy Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the importance of trustworthiness, honesty, and accountability in the individuals entrusted with intelligence gathering. It emphasizes the need for ethical conduct and the prevention of misuse of power. The abstract concludes by highlighting the relevance of the lessons from the Seerah in the modern era, where state surveillance and intelligence gathering have become crucial tools in maintaining security and preventing threats. It calls for a thoughtful and well-regulated approach to spying systems, integrating principles of justice and ethics within the framework of governance, just as exemplified by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). In conclusion, this abstract presents a nuanced perspective on the spying system of the state, drawing inspirations from Sunnah (PBUH). It encourages a balanced approach to intelligence gathering that upholds individual rights, fosters justice, and promotes societal well-being.

Keywords: Intelligence Gathering in Islam, Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH, Islamic Governance, Espionage and Ethics, Justice and Accountability, Ethical Surveillance.

Introduction

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not have a spying system per se. However, during his time as a leader, he employed various methods to gather information and maintain an effective governance system. Here are a few ways Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) addressed problems and issues within the state:

1. Consultation: The Prophet (PBUH) greatly emphasized consultation (shura) when making decisions. He would listen to the opinions and advice of his companions, seeking their input and considering different perspectives before coming to a conclusion.
2. Establishing justice: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always aimed to ensure justice in society. He implemented fair and equal policies, resolving disputes and conflicts in a just manner. He would arbitrate disagreements and encourage reconciliation between conflicting parties.
3. Communication and education: The Prophet (PBUH) would regularly communicate with the people, addressing their concerns and teaching them the principles of Islam. He would convey his message through sermons, teachings, and personal interactions, creating awareness about societal issues and providing guidance on how to address them.
4. Empowerment and delegation: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would delegate responsibilities to trusted individuals within the community, allowing them to address specific issues and make decisions based on their expertise. This not only empowered individuals but also distributed the burden of problem-solving effectively.
5. Compassion and empathy: The Prophet (PBUH) possessed a compassionate and empathetic nature, understanding the struggles and challenges faced by the people. He would offer support and guidance to those in need, helping them overcome their problems.

It is important to note that the methods employed by the Prophet (PBUH) were rooted in moral values, justice, and empathy. While modern systems may have more sophisticated tools for gathering information, the principles of consultation, justice, communication, empowerment, and compassion can still be applied to address problems and issues within a state or society.

Background

When it comes to the strategy of a military consolidation, the intelligence system shows up as its part and parcel. To attain a win-win situation, it is, by all means, essential that our secrets be kept guarded and enemy's secrets, intentions, military posts, warfare, headcounts, and arsenals be known as precisely as possible. It is all possible only through a viable intelligence system. Therefore, in the present era each country has its own network of secret agencies. American CIA, Russian KGB, British MI-6, Israeli Mossad, Afghanistan's NDS, Indian RAW and Pakistani ISI are considered to be the most active secret agencies of the world. One cannot deny the fact that the American CIA is playing a barbarous and bloody game in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The bloody and inhuman games played by infamous American CIA agent Raymond Davis and the Indian RAW agent Sarbajit and Kulbhushan Yadev are still afresh the minds of people.

Keeping in view the contemporary challenges of intelligence system, it is an exigency of the time to minutely study the way the Holy Prophet (PBUH) managed the resources to accomplish the goals of intelligence system and then a comparative study be conducted of the Prophetic secret agency system with that of the contemporary secret agencies' networks. The kind of education and directions the Holy Prophet (PBUH) provided to his companions, assigned to such tasks, must be thoroughly studied. At the same time it is important to specify the limitations and scope of intelligence system in the light of shariah via a critical study that how he Holy Prophet (PBUH) evolved the pros and cons of intelligence system vis-à-vis challenges of twenty-seven battles and how his successors, the caliphs, and the forthcoming

rulers, further modified the system, what useful and instrumental additions were made and what sort of malpractices crept in, what pre-emptive measures were taken at the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Last but not least, the outcomes achieved through the study of the intelligence system established by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) be enlisted and codified. Such outcomes may serve the purpose of guidelines for the secret agencies of Muslim countries, in particular, and for all other countries, in general. The Book under consideration is going to discuss the above-mentioned factors in detail. The personality of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a statesman and military leader and his statesmanship and wisdom of strategic decisions have always been appealing to me. I hold that apart from the divine help, the political and defense strategy, wisdom, farsightedness, and usage of appropriate and timely means for secret services on the part of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) have played an instrumental part in the victory of wars and battles. Introduction Intelligence system plays a vital role in the state security. This article is aimed at pointing out the modern intelligence methods in the light of Islamic perspective. From the history of Islam especially from the Era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), regimes of the right guided Caliphs and successor Muslim states Intelligence system of Muslim states has been elaborated in detail. In the Holy Quran and Seerah of the Holy Prophet there are various guidelines to establish a successful intelligence system which is aligned with Islamic Shariah. The article presents the gradual evolution of intelligence system of Islam and provides insight into contemporary needs and prospect developments in the field. The method of research is narrative, analytical and applied. Basic sources as well as secondary sources are used to investigate into the subject matter. In the nutshell, the present article elaborates a composite scenario of the role of Intelligence system in Muslim rule.

Definition of Intelligence:

The knowledge of Intelligence/spying is part of the secret branches of knowledge. Intelligence is the name of true and authentic information the acquisition of which is not possible generally without intense struggle and endeavor. It is such a knowledge that belongs both to the state of war and peace. Intelligence is the basis of all preparations and tactics regarding a war. It is the process of knowledge of such circumstances of the enemy that are related to the use of power against them. In other words; it is prepared to defeat the opposing side in a battlefield.

This information is acquired through different means during the peace time. This includes both overt and covert operations. It is acquired from T.V, radio, telephone, reference books, maps, business and professional directories, required information purchased from the multinational companies, internet, media, cultural bands, different spies and satellite etc., used during the peace time. A huge portion of intelligence consists of the information gathered during the peace time.

Intelligence can be explained in such a way that it is the study of such a knowledge which is about the power and of the enemy forces and about such circumstances in which an armed action can be taken against the enemy. In other words, its objective is to have a correct, balanced and highly accurate analysis of the situation and the availability of information all the time about foes' capabilities and intentions. The required information is gathered about the enemy during the peace time and the commander fights from beginning to the end during a war by keeping in view this information.

Importance:

Where an unbiased ruler and patriotic people are necessary to establish a strong and stable country, therefore, the security of the land and people, a strong-armed force is vital. It is necessary to have the best army in order to win a war. But in order to get victory or win a battle in a battlefield, it needs spies on several fronts to secretly steal the enemy's operational plan. Where thousands of persons are needed to construct a railway bridge, but only a few individuals are enough to destroy it. Sometimes the spies shock the enemies before the battle by stealing some important intel or documents. Hence, it is necessary to be victorious to have complete information of the enemy's resources, movements, and intentions beforehand. General George Washington says; "What scares me is the enemy's spy. It is my internal wish to keep vigilance on him. This task needs to be handed over to noble, reliable, clever and intelligent personnel so that they can go through the process of investigation with utmost responsibility. This hidden enemy does not have a defined whereabouts therefore; this should be our try to not let it steal our secrets."

Modern Intelligence and the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to give his armed forces the same instructions about intelligence that are being given in modern times. He had formally arranged the intelligence department and amply utilized its services during all his expeditions. The same pattern is followed in recent times. The Russian airmen have been stressed through a popular modus operandi to properly use reconnaissance before and during the war while marching and taking rest. Intelligence is the eye and ear of a commander without which even a single step is not possible.

Therefore, reconnaissance should continue day and night throughout the year and eyes towards the enemy should not be shut at any moment. For this, abounding resources should be used. It should have following three objectives;

1. Explanation of the condition of enemy
2. Explanation of the geographical condition
3. Explanation of the behaviour of local population

Study of the holy life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) not only reveals the principles of individual and collective life but also guides to cope with the ups and downs related to the affairs of the state. There is no branch and angle of human life not seen by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) without leaving the guiding principles.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had arranged a complete intelligence system for the Islamic forces. In every holy war, the spies excellently discharged their duties. Due to which, the best planning, deployment and movement of the forces could be made possible during the battle. During the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had an accomplished intelligence system. Every manoeuver of the enemy was being reported to him and camel riders were transmitting the messages briskly during the battle.

Dr. Hameed Ullah has stated about the intelligence system of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had established such an intelligence system during these unfavourable circumstances. This also provides signs of guidance for the modern Islamic forces. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) appointed agents within and outside of Medina who used to inform the Holy Prophet (PBUH) about the situation of Makkah, Nejad, Taif and other areas. Owing to the intelligence provided by these agents, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to adopt cautious

measures promptly as soon as any tribe formulated a design against Medina.

Usually, there used to be a small squad that was also responsible to find suitable places for encampment, water and fodder apart from getting information about the enemy. Although, fighting was not their objective yet they could engage in light encounters at the time of need. Such squads were of two types namely Intelligence Police and Killing Police.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) found the raw intelligence system of Meccans in heritage. Although, before and during that period formal and organized intelligence systems had come into existence in areas of Rome, Persia, India and China. Philosophical debates had taken place on the matters of intelligence. But in Arabian Peninsula, this branch of warfare was still in its early raw shape and was the same inherited by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) from forefathers. Though, this intelligence system came into being for the survival of tribal society and to support their injustices and illegal killings yet it was not possible for the prophet to accept it in letter and spirit. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) delved into the ideological bases of this intelligence system and planted the bricks of justice and fairness there. He removed the element of oppression and cruelty from it. Then he introduced new, fine and just contrivances in this system and strengthened it on firm foundations.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) fulfilled the need of information before time by appointing spies and sources in enemy tribes by following the principle of practical defense. He devised a formal system to keep an eye on enemy spies and sources and to destroy their efforts by arresting them. This anti-intelligence system was further strengthened during the subsequent Islamic governments. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also made endeavors to fail the violent aims of the enemy. Anti-violence system of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was also very effective. He also left a fine investigative system in succession. He bestowed investigation with the golden rule "No violence in investigation". For protection, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) insisted on the concealment of secrets. He also laid a foundation of a fine system for the protection, accounts and distribution of the properties. In this way, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) kept secrets, people and property beyond the access of the enemy.

In short if we discuss keeping in view of the modern intelligence system, it is known that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was the founder of the modern intelligence system. He left an intelligence system for the Muslims in succession built on firm foundations. Until the Muslims followed the golden principles of this system, their empires were strong, their forces were victorious and peace and serenity was rampant in their areas. But as soon as they shunned these principles, rivals subdued them.

It is needful that the Muslim governments again return to those golden rules on the basis of which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had established his intelligence system. The Muslim countries need to reinforce their intelligence systems on the lines of these golden rules. Strengthen them with modern arts and sciences. In this way, the Muslim world can regain its lost glory. Islamic countries need to revoke the principles from intelligence systems left by imperialist inheritance and promulgate the principles suggested during the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). By relinquishing the principles of ethnicity, bigotry and repression, the golden rules of humane unity, love, brotherhood and peace should have to be made the basis of the intelligence systems of the Muslim countries. Remember that, intelligence systems built on the basis of these principles would not only be strong but also lasting. Rather, they would also help in human welfare, prosperity and development.

Undoubtedly, the Muslims are weak today. They are miserable and backward in terms of knowledge. But this situation is not perpetual. According to someone,

“Majority and minority and strength and weakness are the things to change and they change at last. Majority of yesterday can turn into minority today. And, same is happened with strength and weakness. The real decisive question for the Muslims is that whether they have to reorganize their life by remaining as Muslims or to go for the path of worldly enjoyments without caring for Islam? If the desire is Islam, then there is no remedy except sticking to one’s faith, ideology, religion, civilization and politics while courageously facing the hardships. Undoubtedly in this struggle, along with the strength of faith, ideology and unity, research and knowledge, economic strength, military prowess, invention, proficiency in and hold on technology are necessary. But, the most important thing is vision and resolve. If there is vision but dearth of resolve, then there is no chance of growth and progress. And if both of them are present, all resources can be acquired with divine help and the map of the world can be changed in the same way it was changed in the past. No powerful has the eternal power and there is no such super power that has persisted for good. History is the graveyard of not the one but dozens of super powers.”

We can extract the following Conclusions by Intelligent Examinations of all these Holy Battles;

A. Treaties were concluded with the tribes of the surrounding areas of Medina and made such tribes as allies that intended so. Those who agreed to remain non-aligned they were left to remain so. In this way, First Line of Defense was formed around Medina. Afterwards, they kept strengthening their relations with these tribes gradually. A time came when these tribes were being accounted as the vanguard of the armies of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). If you look at the map of the Arabia, you would see one thing very clear. In case the residents of Makkah were to go to Syria and Egypt by land routes, then they had to pass through the nearby coastal areas of Medina. If an alliance was made the tribes settled from Medina to Yanbooh, then the passage of Meccans caravans from these areas could have been endangered to a great extent. Ansars of Medina already had cordial relations with these tribes. Now the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had reaffirmed these agreements and included in them the sections of mutual help. At first, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) forwarded the process of talks by sending small expeditions to these tribes. Then he shaped these matters into agreement by himself going there¹. These Sarayas and Ghazwas were the basis of the warfare strategy of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and were the basic efforts towards the defense of Medina. In this way, Medina was not only provided with the people responsible to give timely intelligence but also a defensive bulwark was made around it.

B. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) by keeping his warring squads perpetually alert and sending them to different areas and sometimes himself commanding them, not only conferred them with warfare training but also made them acquainted with these areas. These squads proved to be the backbone of the defense system of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in coming days. These squads accompanying with the intelligence of Medina outmaneuvered the adverse actions of the enemy.

C. The biggest victory of an intelligence system happens to be such when the enemy perceives even before the start of the fighting that the people who are up against it are not an easy prey. Through these Sarayas and Ghazwas, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) showed the infidels of Makkah that the leadership of Medina was very alert and deeply watchful of the situation.

They were not oblivious to the defense of Medina. If the Quraish of Makkah were not refrained from their adverse activities, then their life line means the trade route of Makkah to Syria would be closed under compulsion. It was also shown to the Meccans through these types of Sarayas that live and let live and the people of Medina were not forced to take a step ending at the disaster of the people of Makkah. The residents of Medina especially the migrants were right in doing that as the Meccans were illegally occupying their resources, properties and homes. If the Muslims were not doing this, it did not mean that they were lacking the capacity to take such step. Rather, they wanted to live with peace and serenity and they had the complete right to live such life.² One conclusion was such that;

D. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had never lost this thought from his mind that the Jews were also residing in Medina and they used to consider Muslims as a foreign element despite having signed the Treaty of Medina with them. They used to consider their expulsion from Medina as a necessary thing. They were waiting for the Muslims to be weakened so that they could be scrapped from the surface. Since they themselves were not capable of doing that therefore they started looking towards the foreign enemy forces of Islam. For this purpose, they had established secret links with the residents of Makkah and used to keep them informed about all the matters taking place in Medina. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was forced to establish a counter intelligence system against them.

E. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had also established fear and pomp in the hearts of the Jews of Medina through these Sarayas. They were waiting for an opportunity to grab against the Muslims and were also desirous of the revival of the old enemy relations between Aus and Khazraj. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) remedied their all such efforts by which they wanted to entangle the Muslim tribes of Medina into the discard of time of ignorance. These Sarayas brought unity and unanimity among the Muslims. A spirit de corps was flourished and the elements of Islam were strengthened.

F. The migrants had acquired peace and respite inside Medina. They were no more subject to the compulsion and oppression related to religion and beliefs. Therefore, some sort of inactivity was being generated in them while, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was foreseeing grand enemy invasions against them. Their survival lied in keeping alive in them the spirit of action and fighting capability so that they could face every attack in the best way. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also achieved this objective through these Sarayas and Ghazwas.

G. In these Ghazwas and Sarayas, two another important things come before us;

(1) For all these Ghazwas and Sarayas, only the squads consisting of migrants were dispatched and no individual of Ansar was included in them.

(2) These squads were consisted of small armies and they never had been sent for the purpose to fight. In this way, these Sarayas on behalf of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) were meant only for the defense, intelligence and training purposes. As the training of self-discipline was meant to be given to the participants of these Sarayas therefore, the strength was reduced in them so that no fight could be initiated in the conceit of power.

(3) Establishment of friendly contacts with the surrounding tribes of Medina and forming first defense line around Medina was also one of the objectives.

The infidels of Makkah always remained busy in the adverse actions against the Muslims and their peaceful vicinity and every time returned unsuccessful by finding the active squads of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in their way. Preparedness for war, getting knowledge of the actions

of the enemy before time and repulsing the enemy attack timely were the brilliance of the intelligence system of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). As all the adverse endeavors of Makkah were proving futile therefore, they planned a sudden and huge attack on Medina. A powerful need an excuse, how fake it may be to defraud others and destroy the weak. Therefore, the infidels of Makkah also prepared a plan to attack Medina so that they also had an excuse in their hand to show the world that they were right in doing that.

Battle of Badr:

Sarya Nakhlah and the attack of Karz Bin Jabir on the pasture of Medina had become the forerunner of declared opposition and direct warfare. Sarya Nakhla proved a whip for the pride of the Quraish of Makkah and the attack of Karz Bin Jabir on Medina was a clear indication of the defensive weaknesses of Medina. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had never strived for fighting. But the infidels of Makkah had drawn up to scrap the Muslims of their existence. For prudence and for vigilance and carefulness, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) always kept halted his troops to advance. All expeditions the Holy Prophet (PBUH) dispatched before the Battle of Badr or accompanied with the armed squads, were solely meant for defense purposes or were the completion of his defense strategy. He was deviant of the fighting and collision. He was the preacher and desirous of peace. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) did not want to act first. But peace can only be established through a firm and insurmountable defense having the capacity to keep away the enemy from direct action and the same remains hopeful for the peace. The weak tend to invite for exploitation and happen to be easy prey. Keeping in view the future dangers, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) turned towards enhancing the warfare capacity of his companions. He trained them physically, militarily, defensively and intellectually. He sent various expeditions to the expected battlefields to gain know how of these areas. Before the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had sent or commanded eight Ghazwas and Sarayas. Where he had forced the warring enemy squads to retreat remotely, got acquaintance with the neighboring tribes, stroke friendly agreements with them, there he also imparted military training to his men so that their capacity to meet the approaching dangers could be enhanced and true love and belief for the purpose could be ushered in. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had obtained all such objectives from these Ghazwas and Sarayas necessary for an insurmountable defense.³ This time the infidels of Makkah wanted decisive run with the Muslims. They had been done with threat, conspiracies, plots and other adverse actions. Islamic influence was increasing with every other day. The progress of Islam was troublesome for them. They wanted to take avenge of Sarya Nakhlah and Ibn al-Harami. They wanted to satiate the fire of their vengeance by terminating the Muslims for good. They wanted to crush them. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was foreseeing the war preparations on the horizons of Makkah. His intelligence system was very active. He was continuously receiving the news of these war preparations. The infidels of Makkah forcefully dragged the Holy Prophet (PBUH) into the battlefield. Otherwise, he did not want the war. When the paganism and ignorance forced the war on to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), then he too accepted this challenge.

“This great desert hero took the decision of his defense valiantly and according to the custom of the Arab. If the Quraish wanted the matters to be decided in this way so let them be.”⁴
Or in the words of Maulana Maudoodi;

“The Holy Prophet (PBUH), who used to be informed of situation, now felt that the moment had arrived and it was the right time where if the courageous step had not taken, the Islamic movement would become lifeless forever rather possibly no chance of its resurgence would be left”⁵

Whether the war is of Middle-Ages or of the present, demands resources. Quraish of Makkah wanted to fight a huge war against the residents of Medina. They also needed the resources. To acquire these resources, they sent trade caravans in different directions. A war on Madina could only be declared when these caravans were returned after the successful trade. One such trade caravan was dispatched to Yemen and one was to Syria. Apart from being adorers of wealth, infidels of Makkah were also stuck in the false impression that the Muslims were weak and the prestige, fear and pomp of the Quraish was so high that the Muslims could not gather courage to confront them. Therefore, they believed that the Muslims would not sack their trade caravan of Syria. Hence, they only accompany seventy guards with such a lucrative trade caravan whereas the trade value of the caravan was fifty thousand Ashrafis.⁶ Karz Bin Jabir al-Fahri had reached to his camp after a successful assault on Medina. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had also arrived at Medina. Meccans were having upper hand. Before this, the Muslims had successfully guarded against all the assault actions of the Quraish of Makkah. However, this blow compelled the Muslims to think a lot. Before this, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had never thought about offensive war because the Muslims were instructed to fight those who forced them to do so. But it had become necessary now to give attention to the offensive war. Since the fore-warning is needed for offensive defense therefore, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) paid heed towards the intelligence system. He strengthened this system and made it more active and broadened it keeping in view the new and upcoming demands so that timely information could be received about the plans of the infidels of Makkah and their allies. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also decided to keep an eye on the economic affairs and trade caravans of the Quraish because this time with the return of these caravans a war against Medina was apprehended. This might be the first economic intelligence action taken in the history of the mankind. Sarya Nakhla had been dispatched to report about the caravans which were to be returned from Yemen and Taif. But this Sarya had to return due to an inevitable action. Umr Bin Hazrami had been killed during Saray Nakhla and one Quraishi man was killed and two escaped. Quraish of Makkah took this incident as their insult and they were raged with the fury of revenge. Shibli Naumani has written in Seerat-ul-Nabi about Hazrat Urwa Bin Zubair that;

“The murder of Umr Bin Hazrami was the prime reason behind the Battle of Badr and all the preceding battles happened with the Quraish of Makkah” ⁷

But according to the book “Maghazi Rasool Ullah” that attributed to Hazrat Urwa bin Zubair (R.A) that;

“The situation of war was already persisting although the same circumstances persisted before the murder of Umr Bin Hazrami and with him the capture of two persons Usman and al-Hakam also became the reason of the warlike situation.”⁸ The attack from Makkah had become certain however, as discussed earlier, this depended on their economy. It is said that the intelligence war happens to be the war of the minds and is fought with intellect. Quraish of Makkah had also felt this that after the incident of Sarya Nakhla, the conclusion of their caravan of Syria would not be as good. Initially, this very thought created a stir among the

Quraish of Makkah but then they decided to grab the opportunity. Preparations for the war already underway but the madness of war gave vent to vengeance and turned it into a whirling flame.⁹ The days of the return of the caravan from Syria under Abu Sufyan were also nearing and then this trade wealth had to be used in the war against the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) decided to stop this caravan on the way.¹⁰ He dispatched Hazrat Talah (R.A) Bin Abdullah Tamimi and Saeed (R.A) Bin Zaid towards the route of Syria to get information about the Caravan of Abu Sufyan. They stopped at “Hura” a place in the midst of the route between Syria and Makkah. Kashad-ul-Juhni made them as his guests. This person might have been the well-wisher of the Meccans. For this reason, he kept these companions at his place till the passage of the caravan and kept them unaware about it. When the caravan had gone far, then he bade them farewell and accompanied them up to the place of Zulmarrah. When these companions reached back to Medina, it came across that information had reached to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) through other sources and he had left Medina.¹¹ The infidels of Makkah knew that the Muslims had established cordial relations with the surrounding tribes of Medina. They prepared a plan to reduce the competitive strength of the Muslims and disengage the allied tribes of Medina. The war would also have to be enforced along with it. In this way, they wanted to terminate the Muslims for good by rendering them unallied. Under this plan the Muslims for the sake of plundering the caravan, had to be brought out of Medina into the battlefield and then to attack them with full force. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had received the information about this plan of the Quraish of Makkah beforehand. He had the following options to cope with this situation;

First: He had the option to allow the caravan of the infidels of Quraish and did not leave Medina.

Second: He had the option to approach forward and engage with either the trade caravan or the army of the Quraish and then leave the result on Allah Almighty.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had left Makkah for the trade caravan but after three days when he received the information of the departure of Meccans army, he consulted the Ansars and the Migrants and told them Allah might lead them victorious over one of the two groups. As on one hand there was the trade caravan of Abu Sufyan loaded with wealth and on the other hand there was the army of the Quraish to rescue this trade caravan. Therefore, the Holy Quran has explained this situation in the following way;

“(Remember, O believers), when Allah promised you one of the two groups-that it would be yours-and you wished that the unarmed would be yours. But Allah intended to establish the truth by His words and to eliminate the disbelievers.”¹²

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) told his companions that the caravan of Abu Sufyan is carrying the trade goods from Syria along with thirty or forty persons. It should not be allowed to join with the forces coming from Makkah and communication between the two groups should be cut to weaken the enemy power. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had proceeded to confront with such armed thirty or forty armed persons who were accompanying the caravan for its protection. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) left for the accomplishment of this intention with whatever possible force at that time.¹³ Total three hundred and thirteen Muslims were with the Holy Prophet (PBUH).¹⁴ He took the army and reached to the place of Sufra. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) dispatched Hazrat Bisnabis (R.A) Bin Umru and Adi Bin al-Zughba Jabini as spies to get information about the movements of the caravan of the Quraish.¹⁵ The Holy

Prophet (PBUH) had started his journey on 8th of Ramadan. After travelling one stage of the journey, he stayed at the place of Sufra and again moved from there on the 11th of Ramadan. He reached near Badr on 16th of Ramadan. The informers informed that the infidels of the Quraish had arrived at the other end of the valley of Badr. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) stopped there and the forces got off.¹⁶ At the time of starting the journey from Medina, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had caused the bells to be removed from the necks of all the camels for security purposes so that the enemy agents could not determine the movement and direction of the army.¹⁷ The Holy Quran explains about the encamped forces at both sides in the following words;

“(Remember) when you were on the near side of the valley, and they were on the farther side, and the caravan was lower (in position) than you.”¹⁸

After getting into the military camp, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) came out himself to make assessment of the enemy. An old Arab Sufyan Zimri met on the way. He asked him questions about both themselves and the Quraish. He asked the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to first introduce himself. Since the Holy Prophet (PBUH) needed to safeguard his missions and the safety of his force therefore he asked him to first introduce himself and he would follow the suit. The old man began to speak like that “If my informer is true then Muhammad (S.A) and his companions had left Medina on such and such day and by now they should have been on such and such place.” He exactly mentioned the place where the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions had been encamped. He again said; “Quraish of Makkah left such and such day and if my informer is true then they should be on such and place by now.” He mentioned exactly the place, where the Quraish of Makkah had established their cantonment. The old man again asked the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as where did he belong to? The Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied, “We are from water”. The old man thought him to be resident of Persian Gulf or Iraq. However, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) moved on before his further enquiries.¹⁹ In order to know about the exact strength of the Quraish, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) sent Hazrat Ali (R.A) and Hazrat Zubair (R.A) Bin Awam along with other companions from his cantonment to the well of Badr in order to get some news from there. They brought capturing the two watercarriers of the Quraish while one had escaped. Both of them admitted during the investigation that they were the watercarriers of the Quraish. Since the Muslims had initially taken off for the trade caravan of Abu Sufyan therefore, ostensibly they still were thinking about it. They were thinking these watercarriers to be from the caravan of Abu Sufyan. Since, the companions were not ready to believe in these watercarriers therefore used to beat them and made them to say that they were the watercarriers of Abu Sufyan. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was offering the prayers. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) finished the prayer after one Raka ‘at and said to his companions; “You struck them for uttering truth and believed their lie. These are the watercarriers of the Quraish of Makkah, and they are true.” Then the Holy Prophet (PBUH) started investigating them. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked where the Quraish were. The water carriers pointed towards the dunes of Aqanqal being seen at the far end of the valley. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) enquired about the number of the Quraish. They replied that they were in huge numbers. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked how many they were. They replied that they were in huge numbers. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) again questioned about their least number. They said that they did not know. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) then asked them to tell about how many camels they slaughter every day. They

replied that someday nine and someday ten. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said that it was thus known that the Quraish were between nine hundred and one thousand. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) enquired the names of the dignitaries of the Quraish from these watercarriers. They named them one by one. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said that Makkah had thrown its sons in front of you.²⁰ Now we would draw the lines of the battlefield.

References

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² Ibid

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⁴ Ibid, p 146

⁵ Maoododi, *Tafheem-ul-Quran*, Lahore, Maktaba Tameer Insaniat, 1983, Volume-II, p 124

⁶ Raoofah Khalid, *Ehd-e-Nabvi K Ghazwat aur Saraya*, Islamic Publications, June 1999, p 53

⁷ op.ct., *Seerat-ul-Nabi*, p 292

⁸ Hazrat Urwa (R.A) Bin Zubair (R.A), *Maghazi Rasool Ullah*, Translation: Muhammad Saeed-ur-Rehman Alvi, Lahore, Idara Saqafat Islamia, Club Road, June 2000, p 134

⁹ op.ct., *Tafheem-ul-Quran*, P 123

¹⁰ Bukhari, Muhammad Bin Ismaeel, *Sahih Bukhari*, Karachi Qadimi Kutab Khana, 1381 A.H, Vol. A, *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitab-al-Maghazi, Hadith No. 3951

¹¹ op.ct., *Al-Tabqaat-ul-Kubra*, p 312

¹² Al-Quran 8:7

¹³ op.ct., *Al-Seerat-ul-Nabvia*, p 215

¹⁴ op.ct., *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitab-al-Maghazi, Hadith No. 3959

¹⁵ Abu Dawood, Sulaiman Bin Al-Ashat Al-Jastani, *Al-Sunnan Al-Abi Dawood*, Cairo, Maktaba Al-Taoseeq Wal Darasat Fi Dar-ul-Fikar, 2000, Chapter Fil Basul Ayyoon, p 384

¹⁶ op.ct., *Seerat-ul-Nabi*, p 296

¹⁷ Muhammad Ahmad Bashmeel, *Ghazwa Badr*, Translation: Molana Akhtar Fatehpuri, Karachi, Defence Academy, 1989, p 140

¹⁸ Al-Quran 8:42

¹⁹ op.ct., *Al-Seerat-ul-Nabvia*, p 216

²⁰ op.ct., *Maghazi Rasool Ullah*, p 142